



Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Meridian Public Meeting
Wednesday, July 13, 2011
Meridian City Council Chambers
7:00 pm

Chairman Andersen called the meeting to order, introduced himself as being from the Pocatello, Bannock County area. He then asked the commissioners to introduce themselves as follows; **Commission Lou Esposito** from Boise, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from north Idaho, **Commissioner Evan Frasure** from Pocatello, Bannock County, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, and **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise. Present from the staff were **Keith Bybee** and **Cyd Gaudet**.

He then asked **Commissioner Kane** to explain the legal parameters under which the commission will work. Commissioner Kane explained that redistricting happens every 10 years, after the census, pursuant to the U.S. Constitution so that one person=one vote. She explained that the Idaho Constitution allows between 30 and 35 districts and that each district must be equal within a 10% deviation. To the maximum extent possible the commission must preserve traditional neighborhoods and communities of interest, avoid oddly shaped districts, and avoid dividing counties if possible. If counties must be divided they must be adjacent and a highway must connect them. The commission must also attempt to protect precinct lines, and the can not consider incumbents, or protect their respective parties.

Chairman Andersen then explained that the commission has 90 days to complete their plan, until September 4th, and that they have the congressional as well as legislative districts to divide. He asked that presentations be succinct and that the presenters turn in written testimony if have it. He also discussed access to Maptitude to see maps that have been submitted and that the public can submit their own plans. He also thanked IPTV for streaming the hearings so individuals can stay current with the presentations.

First called to testify was **Alejandro Zamora**, a middle school counselor from Caldwell. **Mr. Zamora** wanted to address Latinos, as a specific community of interest, with the commission. He pointed out that 11% of the population in the State of Idaho is now Latino. He also indicated that there are specific areas that the Latino population is concentrated and he feels that these areas need to be in the same district. Specifically he cited that in Canyon County the Latino population is 23.9%, with 75% in Wilder, 35.4% in Caldwell, and 22.9% in Nampa. He stated that creating new lines that allow for this community to maintain its political integrity is essential and fair. Additionally he noted that Minidoka, Jerome and Power Counties have high Latino populations, and he asked that the commission create maps which would ensure the preservation of these local communities of interest. In answer to a question from **Commissioner Frasure**, **Mr. Zamora** indicated that the Latino population of Minidoka County is 32%; Jerome County is 31%, and Power is 30%. He advised the commission that he is currently working on a map which he will submit. **Commissioner Andersen** suggested that he submit those maps as soon as possible. **Commissioner Kane** explained that she appreciated **Mr. Zamora** coming in, that the commission has not really heard from the Latino population up to now, and encouraged that anyone he knows is drawing maps to submit those or make comments on line.

Maria Mabbutt, a small business owner from Nampa was next to address the commission. She stated that she was also present to discuss Latinos as a community of interest. She pointed out that at 11% of the population they are the largest ethnic community in the State. In addition to the information presented by **Mr. Zamora**, she also wanted to point out the high percentage of Latino populations in Lincoln County at 28%, Gooding at 28%, Owyhee at 26% and Cassia County at 25%, and suggested that where the Latino population is concentrated they need to be in the same districts to maintain their political integrity. She specifically mentioned that Legislative Districts 10 and 12, 11 and 26 are very important to maintain as intact as possible, and that she is hoping that they can pick up one or two more

districts. As she indicated that several people were currently working on maps, **Commissioner Moses** pointed out that anyone working on a map needed to submit it quickly.

Next called was **Brad Hoaglund**, who indicated that he was representing the city of Boise as a City Council Member, however it appears that he is a Meridian City Council Member. He referenced the letter that the City of Meridian had already submitted to the commission so he indicated that his testimony would be brief. He advised the commission that the City of Meridian, as the third largest city in Idaho, desires to be kept whole. He advised the commission that they had submitted their existing city limits and areas of impact and had submitted a map on Maptitude. He also asked that the commission use roads as their district lines instead of less obvious things, such as creeks and fences, which had been used previously. **Mr. Hoaglund** also explained that Meridian would like to be wholly contained in the 1st Congressional District, and noted that they are the landlord for the 1st District's Congressman. Another item he noted is that Meridian has grown from 35,000 to 75,000 in population over the last 10 years, and will continue to grow, and due to this he asked that the commission not put them at the high end of the deviation. **Chairman Frasure** asked **Mr. Hoaglund** where he would like to see the congressional line to be, and **Mr. Hoaglund** suggested that moving it west, maybe to Five Mile, or a little further out would work well. **Commissioner Moses** asked **Mr. Hoaglund** how to avoid public confusion regarding what districts they were in and Mr. Hoaglund suggested that using identifiable landmarks, such as major roadways, should help.

Branden Durst, a former legislator, was called next to testify. **Mr. Durst** indicated that he wanted to respond to the references made by **Commissioner Frasure**, in prior hearings, regarding the maps which he had submitted. He indicated that he was going to address congressional districts more than legislative districts given his past and possibly future endeavors. In answer to the previous question from **Commissioner Moses**, he explained that many times while he was campaigning he came across people who did not know which district they were in or who they were voting for, and he stated that the easiest thing for people to understand when voting would be the county that they live in. He then indicated that he sees no reason to divide Ada County, as there are many ways to divide the entire state, into two congressional districts, within a deviation that was less than 1%, without dividing any county. He stated that although there is not a requirement that counties not be divided in the congressional districts he pointed out that if we are going to aspire to that in the legislative districts that we should also aspire to that in the congressional districts. He then discussed the 26 congressional maps which have been submitted to the commission and indicated that he has categorized the four typologies. One category, of which he submitted one, he calls Ada south, and stated that 4 people have submitted this type of map. He stated that the most popular is the Treasure Valley-centric map, of which 7 people have submitted maps. The next is the Ada north, of which 6 people have submitted similar maps, and the last is the status quo, which is just moving the line a little to the west, of which 6 maps have been submitted. He indicated that the status quo map is the least popular, at less than 25%, because people don't think this is working, as they don't know which congressional district they live in. He also suggested, in his opinion, that dividing Ada County would be difficult for the commission to defend in court. As to legislative districts, he urged the commission to think about neighborhood associations when thinking about communities of interest. **Mr. Durst** also noted that in regard to Canyon County he encouraged the commission to vote to slice the precincts, as they are not appropriate as they are now. He also would like to see cities kept together, and would like to see Ada County with 9 legislative districts, as there is no reason constitutionally not to have it. **Commissioner Frasure** then asked **Mr. Durst** how many of the 26 maps he had submitted, of which **Mr. Durst** indicated he had submitted four. **Commissioner Frasure** then asked him, that in submitting 25% of the maps did he represent 25% of the interests of Idaho. **Mr. Durst** indicated that he did not represent 25% of the people but feels that people like him do.

Next to testify was **Jose Alfredo Hernandez**, an HIV Case Manager from Kuna. He noted the health care disparities of the Latino population in Idaho, and indicated that these disparities can be overcome on a community basis through communication, and outreach. As a consequence, Latinos need a larger voice in Congress and the Legislature. He asked the commission to consider the significant growth of Latinos in Idaho and to protect their community of interest.

Lymans Blackmon was called next and was not present.

Wanda Ortiz Perez was also called and was not present.

Next to address the commission was **Dennis Tanikuni**, Assistant Director of Governmental Affairs for the Idaho Farm Bureau. He explained that the Idaho Farm Bureau represents 64,700 member families and of these 14,456 are agricultural producers which equates to 56.5% of the state's farmers and ranchers. He asked that the commission not isolate cities and create islands of population surrounded by large rural districts as this would allow urban population centers to control the legislature. He suggested that by creating districts utilizing rural areas supplemented with some urban population will be more representative and help assure that rural votes count. He also asked the commission to keep county splits to a minimum, retain 35 legislative districts, keep congressional districts as mathematically equal as possible, and not use the guidelines in the Idaho Code regarding legislative districts to create congressional districts, and to consider splitting counties to create congressional districts. He also requested that the commission first create the congressional districts, and then create the

legislative districts. **Commissioner Moses** then asked **Mr. Tanikuni** about his request regarding splitting cities and putting them with rural areas and then his request regarding not breaking up communities of interest, and asked how these two requests work together. **Mr. Tanikuni** indicated that their definition of splitting cities may not be the same as others. To illustrate this point he discussed an agricultural area in south Nampa where a large rural area surrounds the city. **Commissioner Moses** then asked him about the concept of rural districts needing rural representation. **Mr. Tanikuni** then indicated that many of his members are quite conservative, but there will always be people with different opinions and that you have to try for an average. **Commissioner Kane** then pointed out that diverse groups are good, and that the commission, as a diverse group, will try to compromise where possible, however they will have the one person, one vote principle in the back of their minds at all times in trying to come to the middle.

Ralph Perez from Garden City, in District 16, was next to testify. He indicated that he is in favor of maintaining 35 legislative districts, and would actually like to see a constitutional change to increase the number of districts to increase representation. He stated that he is also supportive of moving the congressional line west, and that Five Mile would be appropriate, so that Ada County continues to have 2 Congressional Representatives. He stated that this was appropriate given the additional requirements and scrutiny which Ada County deals with from the federal government. **Commissioner Moses** asked for his thoughts about dividing districts into an A and a B seat, to which **Mr. Perez** indicated he did not want to give his opinion until he had time to think more about this.

Next to testify was **Sharon Fisher** from Kuna in District 21. She stated that she did not have an opinion regarding creating 30 to 35 districts. She indicated in the last 10 years, that Kuna was one of fastest growing cities in Idaho, which has made District 21 too big. However she stated that at 16,000 people it is not big enough for its own district so it needs to be combined with another area. She explained that there are many people that live around Kuna, and although they may not be in the actual City of Kuna, they feel they do live in Kuna and have a lot in common and are in the City of Kuna impact area. Her suggestions then for district boundaries were the Five Mile area on the east, around Lake Hazel on the north, and on the south, the Owyhee County line. If this does not include enough people to form a district she suggested crossing over into Canyon County and encompassing Melba. She indicated that Kuna and Melba are a community of interest as they are both agricultural, they both border BLM land, they share a newspaper, and people on each side cross the border a dozen times a day to talk to their friends. Commissioner Andersen asked that she provide the Commission with a copy of her written testimony.

Douglas Jones, a former legislator in the Idaho House of Representatives, next addressed the commission and talked about when he represented District 23, from west Twin Falls and all of Owyhee County, which was 200 miles from one end of the district to his home, and there was no paved road connecting those two points (Homedale and Filer), without leaving his district. He suggested that how the commission defines a community of interest will have a lot to do with how the districts they create will look. He suggested that a community of interest for Melba and Homedale, which he represented, was probably not west Twin Falls, and would more likely be Canyon County. He strongly suggested that the commission look at communities of interest. He didn't know whether he had done a good job representing all of the constituents of his large district, but neither he nor the voters had a choice about that, and he indicated that maybe sub districts would be a viable solution to the problem of such large districts. He also asked that the commission think about future growth and to also think of the long term good of the state and how it will be represented over the next 10 years. Former **Rep. Jones** recalled how he and **Commissioner Frasure** had participated in the redistricting process in the legislature 20 years earlier, which had resulted in inter-party primary contests in both parties. He also urged the use of well defined geographic points as boundaries such as roads, and suggested that they start from the outside boundaries of the State, start north, go east, and that they can then shift some things in Ada and Canyon County, where the population is the most concentrated. He stated that, while he and Commissioner Frasure had not always agreed on issues, he felt they had come up with a pretty good redistricting plan in the end. Nevertheless, he noted that redistricting by the citizen commission is a far better process than in the legislature.

Next called was **Dan Loughrey** from Boise, who gave some history of the congressional district line running through Ada County, and stated that by moving it to the west around Five Mile makes sense to him as it doesn't affect any counties outside of Ada. He further stated that if the congressional line impacted other counties it would have a greater fiscal impact than localizing it in Ada County which has historically borne those costs and reminded the Commission to consider taxpayer interests when drawing lines. He also suggested that the rural communities of interest in western Ada County and eastern Canyon County need to be in the same district as they have similar interests and should be represented together. He further stated that because of the close ties between eastern Canyon and western Ada that the commission should ignore county lines in this instance.

Don Kershner, from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 291 in Boise, was next to testify. He stated he has put about 50 hours in on Maptitude since he was first asked to look at it. He mentioned that he had submitted L15 to the commission for consideration but that he was told he was naïve in his drawing and did not want to address that map. He talked about map C25, which he submitted, which moves Ada County entirely into District 1 and Canyon County and Owyhee entirely into District 2 which is a 0.4% deviation, and gives Latino population 16.6% of the vote in District 2, He suggested that this gives Latinos a strong voice in District 2, and if you put Canyon County in District 1 it splits the Latino population. **Commissioner Frasure** then asked **Mr. Kershner** about the community of interest in Canyon County. **Mr. Kershner** indicated that his family is from Canyon County. Canyon County is more rural and industrial, while Ada County is more technical with BSU, Micron, and HP. He explained that there is a definite difference between these counties and that

drawing lines between them made a lot of sense. **Commissioner Moses** asked about L15 which **Mr. Kershner** had submitted, and if he now would change anything. In response, **Mr. Kershner** explained when he got into the political data, and he knows they can't look at that, but right after the elections when **Commissioner Moses** provided **Mr. Kershner** an analysis of election results, he noted that when you gain a Democratic district, you lose a Republican district but felt he didn't have the political experience to do that. His boundaries were based on Ada County, the Boise River, I84, and Highway 21, and then he filled in from one end until he got to the other, until he got to around 45,000 and then he'd draw a line there. Then he would start from there until he got to another boundary. When he got done his map looked a lot like the old map. He stated that going down to the census block level was awful. He explained that he really didn't know the rest of the state. **Commissioner Moses** noted that he'll have to give this testimony great weight, not only because he spent a lot of time with Maptitude, but also because he reads what **Commissioner Moses** writes.

Next to testify was **Ronalee Linsenmann**, an Idaho Republican Woman, from Nampa, speaking on behalf of herself. She discussed a map that she had seen online, that had been reportedly drawn by a Cornell University student which had one large and one small geographical congressional district. She was glad that the commissioners would be giving verbal rationale for their maps. She stated this configuration of congressional districts is unfair to one person elected to the U.S. House of Representatives because of the travel time involved. She further stated that Idaho is the envy of some circles because of its close relationships to its elected officials. She suggested that moving the current congressional boundary line to Five Mile seems logical, and will be more equitable for the two congressmen when meeting with their constituents. She encouraged the commission to use big recognizable roads, such as Five Mile, for dividing lines.

Representative Marv Hagedorn, from District 20, was next to testify. He explained that he was speaking as the Co-Chairman of the Ada County Republican Central Committee. He stated that he felt he had a conflict in talking about legislative districts so his comments would be regarding the congressional districts. He expressed that some communities like Kuna in western Ada County are still partly rural, and have a commonality that is different than Boise, so the current dividing line between C1 and C2 does make sense. This line has changed from Orchard to Cole over the years, and he recommends using well known documented streets as dividing lines. He also indicated that having two Congressional members available to Ada County residents is invaluable. **Commissioner Andersen** noted that he and **Rep. Hagedorn** wear the same lapel pin even though they belong to different political parties. **Rep. Hagedorn** agreed that there are always connections, probably there are only 5-10% of things they don't agree on, and those are the things they need to work on together. **Commissioner Andersen** declared that was the philosophy of the commission.

Next to testify was **Phil McGrane**, Chief Deputy to the Ada County Clerk's Office. He indicated that it was his office, and the other clerk's offices throughout the state, that would bear much of the burden of implementing the commission's final work and have a great interest in how you conduct proceedings. He indicated that he was presenting the commission with a letter and some maps as visual aids from the Ada County Clerk; however he wished to highlight a few areas of the letter. He stated that it has been discussed that cities are important communities of interest throughout the public hearing process. He provided the Commissioners with a map of Legislative District 20 and showing the city limits of Meridian. He explained that the city limits of Meridian were used last time as a community of interest and as a boundary for District 20 which created jagged and looped lines. He stated this is a noble goal to keep the city boundaries intact when drawing districts but he suggested using a more generalized area that go out beyond the current boundaries and not use the current city boundaries. The City of Meridian boundaries had changed drastically during the last redistricting, and pointed out that the City of Meridian annexed 12 times before the final plan was official. He asked that the commission use more logical and major landmarks as boundaries and to consider future growth. He provided a map to the Commission that shows a generalized area that go beyond city boundaries. **Mr. McGrane** also noted the relationship between congressional and legislative districts and the importance of aligning them. There are currently four legislative districts that are split between congressional districts. He asked that the legislative districts be aligned with the congressional districts because if they are not, it makes administering elections that much more complicated. He stated that protecting the integrity of the elections process is the Clerk's primary concern and aligning congressional and legislative districts would decrease the chance for error due to multiple ballots when these don't match up. He recommended using Five Mile as a dividing line. He also discussed dividing precincts and indicated that there is not much reason to consider the existing precincts in urban areas as they will have to redraw their precincts from scratch after reapportionment. In rural areas, precincts are much more important to the elections process. For the Clerk, they will be redrawing precincts from scratch to help with the administration of elections and have cost savings for producing ballots and reducing the error in ballots. Lastly, he indicated they would like to see Ada County kept whole to help with the integrity of the voting process. When legislative districts go across county lines, there are infinitely more ways in which the integrity of the elections process are affected from ballots to ballot counting. He encouraged the commissioners to keep these practical considerations in mind.

Harry Tucker, was next called to testify and was not present.

Next called was **Curtis Ellis**, from north Idaho originally and now living in Boise, who stated that he would prefer 35 legislative districts, as anything less would make the districts bigger. He suggested that there is a definite dividing line between Boise City, and the far side of Meridian, toward Star. As such he supports dividing Ada County between congressional districts, and moving the line west approximately 2 miles.

Thomas Dayley, from south Ada County, was next to address the commission. He stated that he supports a clearly defined congressional boundary and suggests just moving it west a few miles. He explained that most people in Idaho go to all congressional members when they have an issue that they would like to have represented. He also suggested that the commission keep the maximum 35 legislative districts to provide the most representation. He indicated that he understands that being from District 21 he knows that they will have to give up some population and suggested that Kuna and Melba is a community of interest that could logically be put together; however again, the dividing line needs to be clearly defined to limit voter confusion.

Commissioner Kane next wanted to acknowledge a young man in a baseball cap that had been sitting patiently and thanked him for being interested in Idaho politics.

Next to testify was **Kathie Garrett**, from Meridian, in District 14. She stated that she is in favor of maintaining 35 legislative districts to allow close relationships with legislators and to have the best representation possible. She said that fewer would cause larger districts and dilute the public's voice. She also suggested that the commission needs to consistently apply the test of communities of interest around the state, not just for one favored community of interest.

Rayola Jacobsen, from Owyhee County and now east Boise, in District 18, was next to address the commission and stated that she supports moving the congressional district line west to maintain representation. She also asked that the commission use clearly defined boundaries. She also suggested that people in rural communities need to be represented by people who understand their needs, as agriculture maintains the economic base. She asked that communities of interest be maintained, that they maintain 35 districts because it provides the greatest amount of representation, and that maintaining counties in their current configuration works well. In illustration of this she talked about their cooperation with the Shoshone -Paiute tribes and asked that they not be split apart. She further suggested that the congressional line just be moved west to a clearly defined boundary, which helps the average voter. **Commissioner Frasure** then asked Ms. Jacobsen for her comments regarding sending Ada County north. **Ms. Jacobsen** indicated that it is very difficult for representatives to understand the issues of their constituents when they are so far away from them.

Colleen Fellows, Chairman of the Ada County Democrats, was next to testify. She stated that politics should be put aside and focus on her concern that people do not know where they are going to vote and who they are voting for. She said she would like to see the commission use static recognizable boundaries that do not divide communities. She suggested that Ada County should have 9 districts wholly within the county, and not to extend legislative districts beyond the county to avoid confusion. She stated that for ease of voting that the legislative and congressional districts should be aligned. She emphasized that city boundaries are not static and suggested using county lines, rivers, the interstate or major roads for congressional and legislative lines. She suggested that if the congressional line were to bisect Ada County, then please use something recognizable.

Chairman Andersen indicated that the commission would start putting all of this information together the following day in their first official meeting to draw lines. He suggested that anyone wishing to further testify could submit written information.

Commissioner Kane then indicated that the public hearing process has been a profound and rich experience for her and she has heard from a lot of very different people who have diverse interests and that the commission will try to accommodate those interests.

Commission Frasure then indicated that this commission has nearly tripled the number of hearings from the last time, and that the public information is critical in this process. He indicated that they are not to draw lines to protect any incumbents or political parties, and explained that this is a bipartisan commission, not a nonpartisan commission. He also indicated that it has been a pleasure getting to know the other commissioners, and feels that they have the chance to get this wrapped up rapidly as this is a very good commission, and they have an excellent chance to get their work done.

Chairman Andersen added his thanks to the State, and stated that he is looking forward to melding all of this information together. With that, he adjourned the meeting at 9:04 pm.